

Interagency Wildfire Management Team
Meeting Notes
July 31, 2002

Gene Darling (Emergency Management and Response, LANL) announced that the fire danger has returned to "very high" levels. Up to this point in this year's monsoon season, only low amounts of precipitation have been received. This may portend extreme fire conditions in the autumn.

Robbie Stibbard (Los Alamos County Fire Department) reported that the removal of dead trees in the western area of Los Alamos has been completed. This area will be planted with 20,000 seedlings. This winter, thinning and mechanical treatments of fuels will continue in 900, unburned acres in Walnut Canyon, Bayo Canyon and other areas. Finally, Robbie reported that the Fire Department has been receiving phone calls from the public concerning dead trees that have been increasing in numbers throughout the Los Alamos region.

Rob Farris (Fire Protection Group, LANL) announced for the Cerro Grande Rehabilitation Project Office that the proposed fire hazard reduction mitigations for Planning Area 5 have been developed and have been distributed for review. This planning area includes much of the Los Alamos Canyon.

Randy Balice (Ecology Group, LANL) will present the final results of the wildfire behavior modeling project to the Ecological Society of America Annual Meeting. This includes simulations and economic analyses that compare wildfires before and after thinning of forests.

Manny L'Esperance (Emergency Management and Response, LANL) reported that improvements to the fire cache and helicopter landing area at TA-49 have been completed. Manny also reported that a recent explosives test at LANL started a spot fire that required active suppression.

Jeff Walterscheid (Water Quality and Hydrology Group, LANL) traveled to Arizona to assist in the post-fire rehabilitation activities being conducted in the wake of the severe wildfires that burned earlier this summer. Jeff also reported that the water stored in Los Alamos Reservoir has been removed in anticipation of large inputs from areas burned by the Cerro Grande Fire above the reservoir. Finally, Jeff noted that the drought has hurt previous rehabilitation efforts in Los Alamos in that the seeded grasses have not been developing as expected.

Jim Whittington (Bandelier National Monument) noted that the improvements to the fire cache at TA-49 have been significant. In addition, the Monument is maintaining its fire preparedness at Level 5.

The next IWMT meeting will be at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, August 14, at TA-21, Building 210 in the Conference Room (142). The IWMT meets every other week and these meetings are open to the public. Contact Randy Balice (balice@lanl.gov, 665-1270) for further information, or to get on the distribution list for these meeting notes.